

CHAPTER 10: ENJOYING DAILY LIFE



"A wide variety of cultural and recreational opportunities that lead to a fun and healthy lifestyle for a diverse population."

Norfolk, as the urban center of the Hampton Roads region, provides an abundance of opportunities for people to relax and play. The availability of such opportunities is critical to the success of any vibrant city. The opportunities found in Norfolk include those provided by universities, museums, beaches, parks, libraries, and entertainment venues, as well as the uses that emerge around these locations, such as coffee shops, cafés, art studios, and bookstores. Together with the programs that occur at these places, they enhance the quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors.

The diversity of Norfolk's population demands a variety of recreational and cultural facilities and programs. Opportunities for youth are critical in any urban place. As Norfolk's population ages, encouraging active living for older citizens will also become increasingly important.

In recent years, Norfolk has experienced increases in its population of professionals in creative careers such as science, engineering, education, computer programming, research, the arts, design, and media. This group, termed the "creative class" in a series

of books by University of Toronto public policy Professor Richard Florida, has worked independently of City efforts to enhance the experience of living in Norfolk. Their efforts have included initiating events and festivals, supporting entertainment venues, and opening new media and creative business ventures. They have also lobbied the City to remove barriers to the provision of facilities and activities that are attractive to their group. Groups such as the Greater Norfolk Corporation have launched initiatives such as “Brain Drain to Brain Gain” to attract and retain young professionals.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Among the opportunities Norfolk residents have for daily enjoyment is the wide array of recreational opportunities offered by the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Open Space. Norfolk is home to approximately 160 separately-designated public parks, totaling approximately 2,500 acres, and 27 community centers (see Map DL-1). This includes two festival parks – Town Point Park and Ocean View Park – capable of hosting large events, three golf courses, and six ten-acre-plus community parks. The City hosts a wide variety of recreation programs at these facilities, ranging from fitness classes to organized athletic leagues, and from art instruction to technology education. Linking these amenities, the City also has initiated development of a system of bicycle paths that is planned for expansion and includes both on- and off-road facilities (see Providing Transportation Options chapter).



Constant additions and upgrades are being made to the City’s parks and recreation centers. The Lamberts Point Community Center opened in 2010 and the City is constructing an aquatic center in Campostella scheduled to open in 2013.



The private sector also provides recreational facilities available to the public, some of which are in partnership with the City. A recreation center, funded through the Joan B. Kroc Foundation as a partnership between the City, the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority, and the Salvation Army, is planned for the Broad Creek area. A YMCA, to be developed in partnership with the City, is planned for the Park Place area.



Norfolk Public Schools operates multiple school sites that include some recreational amenities that are made available for public use. The City also offers opportunities for outdoor passive recreation. These include the Norfolk Botanical Garden, a site of over 155 acres showcasing numerous plant species, and the Virginia Zoo, housing 115 species of animals on 53 acres; both facilities charge admission for entry. The City’s eight

publicly-owned cemeteries, containing several miles of paved pathways suitable for walking, offer additional opportunities for passive recreation.

LIBRARIES AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

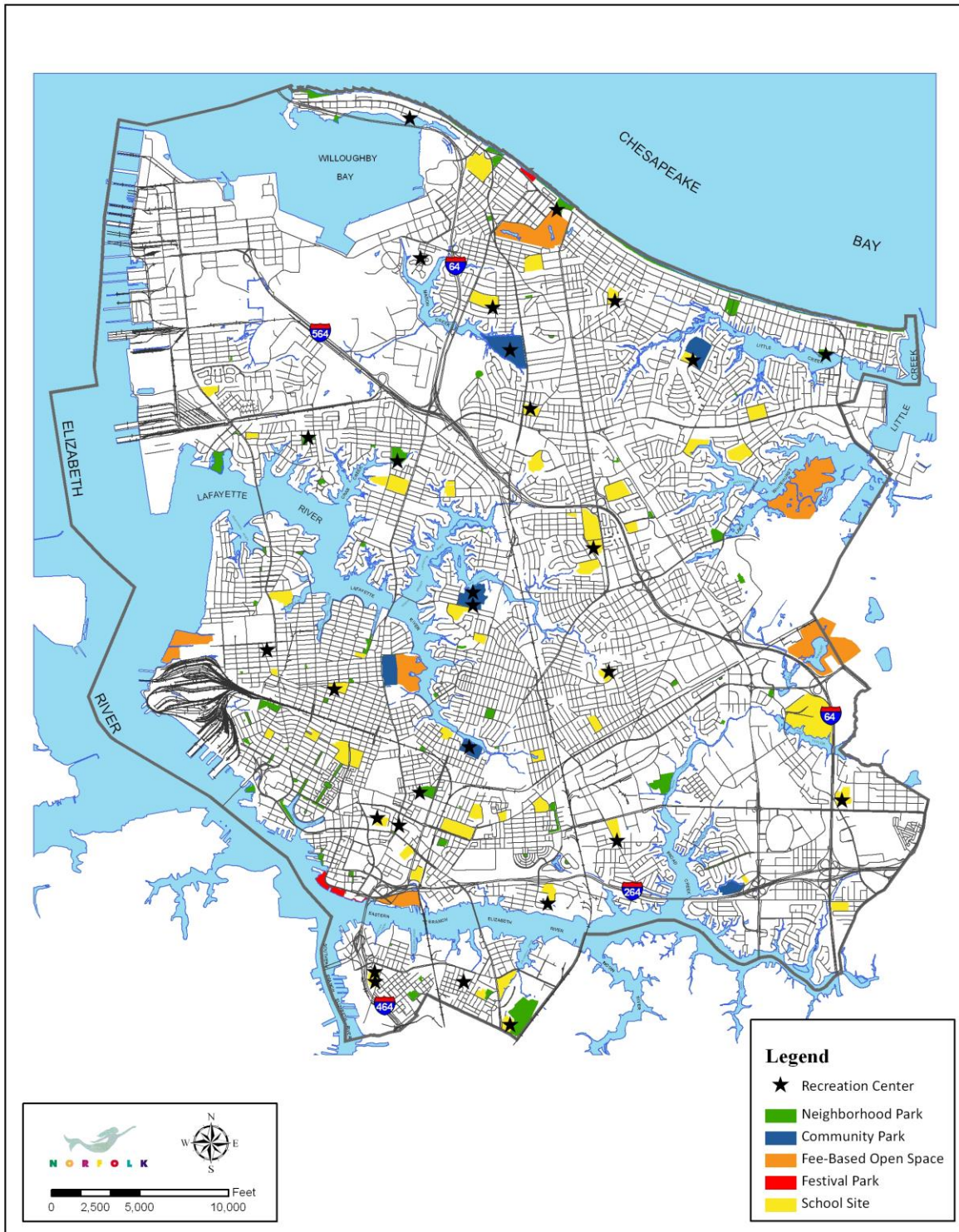
Libraries and cultural facilities are another area in which Norfolk – and regional – residents are provided with opportunities for daily enjoyment. Through twelve libraries (see Map DL-2) totaling more than 139,000 square feet and a bookmobile, Norfolk Public Library (NPL) provides free public access to more than 616,000 books and multimedia items, computers, meeting rooms, and a wide variety of programs and events. Utilization of library facilities has increased steadily in recent years, with more than 1.2 million visits made to a library facility in 2010. NPL is in the process of upgrading its facilities to respond to this increased utilization, constructing a new library in Ocean View that opened in 2008, and a new main library Downtown that is scheduled to open in 2014. NPL has also focused on upgrading technology and enhancing the public spaces in its facilities to better integrate them with the neighborhoods that surround them.



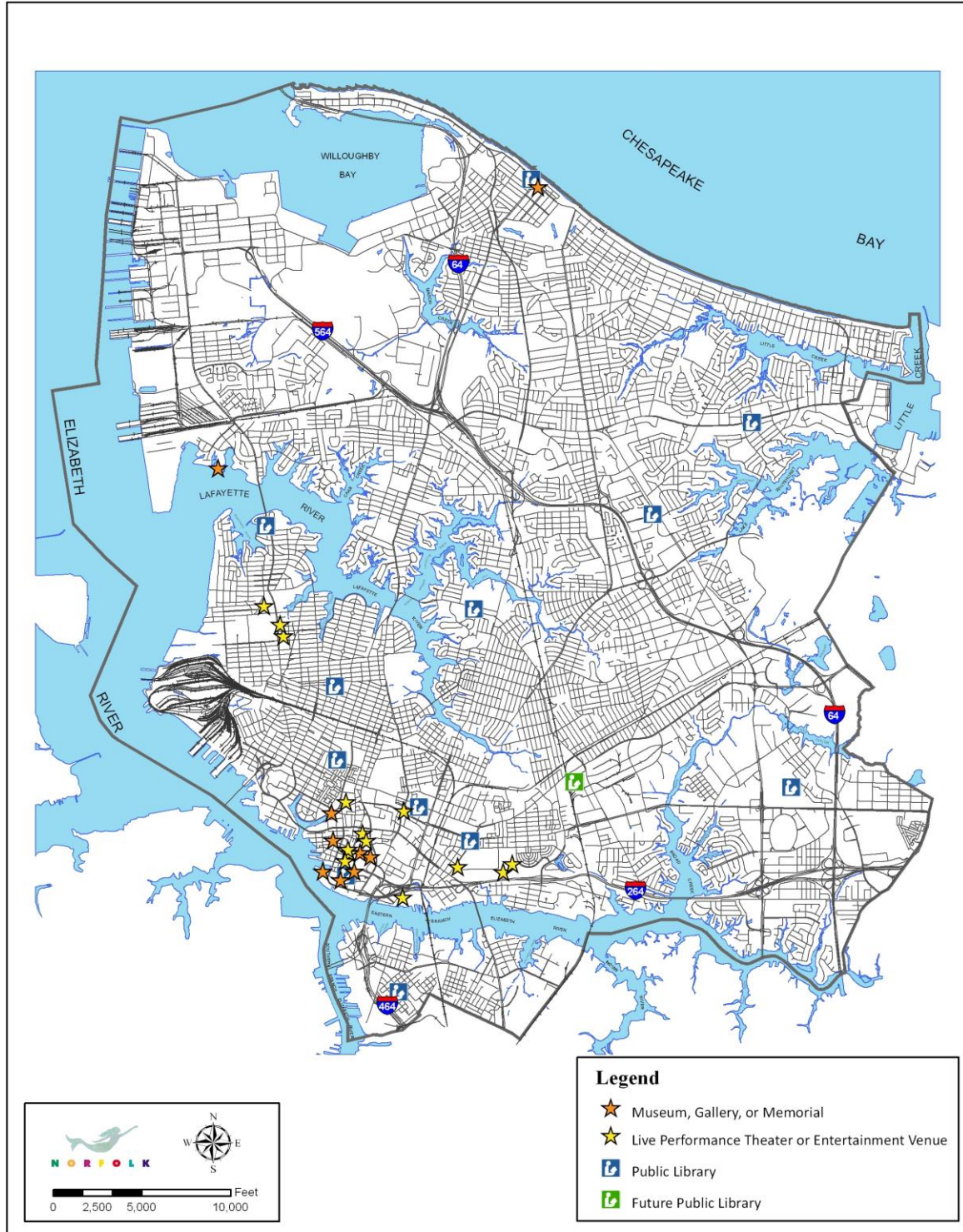
Norfolk is also home to a diverse collection of museums, performance venues, and cultural facilities (see Map DL-2), including the Attucks Theater, Chrysler Hall, the Chrysler Museum of Art, Harbor Park, Harrison Opera House, the MacArthur Memorial, Nauticus, and the Norfolk Scope Arena. In addition to these facilities, there are numerous other facilities operated by private organizations, universities, and other institutions. Norfolk also maintains a partnership with Norfolk FestEvents, a not-for-profit organization charged with hosting and promoting festivals, special events, concerts, and other events at various locations Downtown and in Ocean View, including Town Point Park and Ocean View Beach Park, as well as venues like Waterside, MacArthur Center, and the Half Moone Cruise and Celebration Center.



MAP DL-1. PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION CENTERS



MAP DL-2. LIBRARIES AND CULTURAL FACILITIES



KEY ISSUES

Based on existing conditions and trends, following are the key issues in the enjoyment of daily life in Norfolk:

1. Providing Norfolk residents with a variety of parks and recreational opportunities.
2. Providing Norfolk and regional residents with a variety of cultural opportunities.
3. Fostering the development of a more vibrant, dynamic city.

IMPORTANT LINKAGES

The goals, outcomes, and actions outlined in this chapter are linked to goals, outcomes, and actions found in the following chapters:

- Identifying Land Use Strategies
- Creating and Maintaining Healthy and Vibrant Neighborhoods
- Promoting Environmental Sustainability
- Supporting Lifelong Learning
- Delivering Quality Community Services
- Fostering Responsible Regional Cooperation

Daily Life Goal 1. Provide Norfolk residents with a rich variety of parks and recreational opportunities.

Outcome DL1.1. A variety of recreational programs and facilities at convenient locations.

Metrics:

- *Percent of households located within the distances established in Action 1.1.1 from a recreational facility.*
- *Acres of recreational land per 1,000 residents.*

Action DL1.1.1. Locate parks and recreation facilities throughout the City in proximity to residential areas, applying the standards below:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ○ Neighborhood parks: ½ mile | ○ Recreation centers: 2 miles |
| ○ Gymnasiums: 1 mile | ○ Baseball fields: 2 miles |
| ○ Bicycle paths: 2 miles | ○ Soccer/football fields: 2 miles |
| ○ Water access: 2 miles | ○ Indoor swimming pools: 4 miles |

Action DL1.1.2. Provide recreational facilities to maintain a standard of 15 acres of recreational land per 1,000 residents.

Comments: The 2010 Recreation Parks and Open Space Master Plan identifies 13 locations for new neighborhood parks and recommends enhancements to several dozen parks and playing fields.

Action DL1.1.3. Seek partnership opportunities with private sector entities, including civic leagues, schools, religious institutions, and other organizations to assist in maintaining and operating parks and recreation centers.

Action DL1.1.4. Ensure that outdoor recreational facilities that share sites with schools are open and accessible to residents outside school hours (see Supporting Lifelong Learning chapter).



Action DL1.1.5. Design parks and recreational facilities to maximize flexibility, so that they can be easily adapted to changes in demographics.

Action DL1.1.6. Enhance public access to parks and recreational facilities by making needed infrastructure improvements to access roads, parking areas, sidewalks, bikeways, boat ramps, and beach access ways.

Action DL1.1.7. Ensure that one public water access point is provided for every ¼ mile of waterfront by maintaining existing access points, particularly those that provide parking and those along the Southeast Coast Paddling Trail, and adding new access points, with a priority given to physical access at existing parks, where none are presently available.

Action DL1.1.8. Provide a variety of programs at parks and recreational facilities designed to meet the needs of Norfolk's residents through all stages of life, from childhood to the retirement years.

Action DL1.1.9. Periodically survey parks and recreation customers to identify desired changes in facilities and programming.

Action DL1.1.10. Provide learn-to-swim and boater safety programs for children and adults at community centers, public schools, and other providers of community services.

Action DL1.1.11. Continue to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to maintain navigation channels in the City's waterways through maintenance dredging and other channel improvement projects, in order to ensure access for recreational boaters.

Daily Life Goal 2. Provide the residents of Norfolk and the region with a variety of cultural opportunities.

Outcome DL2.1. Libraries that provide access to information for all residents, and support lifelong learning, cultural enrichment, and intellectual stimulation.

Metrics:

- *Percent of households located within 2½ miles of a library.*

Action DL2.1.1. Ensure that public library facilities are located throughout the City so that no resident lives more than 2½ miles from a library.

Action DL2.1.2. Create comfortable and inviting common spaces within libraries to invite users to interact with others in the community.

Action DL2.1.3. Periodically survey library customers to identify necessary changes in hours of operations and services offered, as well as in the collections of books, multimedia, and other materials.

Action DL2.1.4. Regularly re-evaluate technology and computer resources to ensure the service demands and technology needs of library customers are met.

Action DL2.1.5. Continue to provide library programs that celebrate Norfolk's cultural diversity and history.



Action DL2.1.6. Continue to enhance programmatic offerings such as early childhood literacy, after-school care, local history and genealogy, and job search programs.

Outcome DL2.2. A variety of cultural and entertainment opportunities.

Metrics:

- *Percent change in admissions to cultural and entertainment facilities.*

Action DL2.2.1. Continue to recognize the importance of the arts as an economic tool by coordinating with and promoting the activities of arts organizations such as the Virginia Arts Festival, the Virginia Opera, the Virginia Stage Company, and the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, as well as arts programs offered by Norfolk State University, Old Dominion University, and Tidewater Community College.

Action DL2.2.2. Continue to provide Norfolk and regional residents with access to cultural and entertainment opportunities through support of facilities such as the Attucks Theater, Chrysler Hall, the Chrysler Museum of Art, Harbor Park, Harrison Opera House, the MacArthur Memorial, Nauticus, the Norfolk Botanical Garden, the Norfolk Scope Arena, Ocean View Park, Town Point Park, and the Virginia Zoo, as well as facilities located at Norfolk State University, Old Dominion University, and Tidewater Community College.



Action DL2.2.3. Explore opportunities for collaborating across jurisdictional boundaries in order to reduce competition among regional cultural facilities and entertainment venues.

Daily Life Goal 3. Foster the development of a more vibrant, dynamic city.

Outcome DL3.1. A city that retains and attracts the creative class.

Metrics:

- Percent change in employment in the fields of science, engineering, education, computer programming, research, the arts, design, and media.

Action DL3.1.1. Support the efforts of the “creative class” as they work to enhance the vibrancy of Norfolk’s culture.

Action DL3.1.2. Utilize new technologies to more effectively promote events and activities throughout the City.

Action DL3.1.3. Support the provision of art in public spaces throughout the City.

Comments: The City of Norfolk’s Public Art Commission is charged with installing public art throughout the City. Private efforts, such as the Downtown Norfolk Council’s “Art Everywhere” event, where Granby Street storefronts are transformed into art installations, are also supported.

Action DL3.1.4. Revise regulations to reduce restrictions on activities that add “life” to the street in appropriate locations, such as street vending, parades, festivals, road races, and other events.



Action DL3.1.5. Enhance pedestrian activity in appropriate locations to encourage the development of a desired mix of uses.

Comments: The City encourages pedestrian activity in a variety of locations, including Downtown, the Pedestrian Commercial Overlay zoning districts, and the Transit Supportive Areas. See the Identifying Land Use Strategies and Providing Transportation Options chapters for more information.

Action DL3.1.6. Support the creation of one or more “arts districts” in Norfolk by making needed regulatory changes to facilitate their development.

Comments: Citizen groups have been pursuing the creation of arts districts in at least two locations – the 35th Street corridor in Park Place and the area north of Brambleton Avenue between St. Paul’s Boulevard and the Chrysler Museum. Regulatory changes may be required to facilitate the appropriate mix of uses, including live/work spaces.

Action DL3.1.7. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to encourage bicycle and pedestrian travel.

Action DL3.1.8. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to require provisions for bicycles in the design of new facilities.

